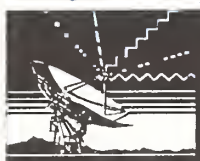


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# Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2691

December 9, 1994

**1274 USDA FIELD OFFICES TO BE CLOSED --** Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced (December 6) plans to consolidate or close 1274 field offices to save money and streamline operations. Offices throughout the nation will close their doors and transfer their functions to USDA field service centers to offer "one stop shopping" for customers. USDA's new Farm Service Agency combines the efforts of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, the Soil Conservation Service, the Farmers Home Administration and the Rural Development Administration. Espy says the closings will save taxpayers \$3.6 billion. The doors to 152 offices have already closed, with another 20% to close immediately. In the next four or five months, 30% of the field offices will close. The remaining offices are scheduled to close some time in the next two or three years. Espy says USDA will lose 11,000 jobs in the move, but almost all of the downsizing would take place through attrition, retirement and buyouts. Espy estimates farmers will save 2.5 million hours annually in reduced paperwork requirements. **Contact: Jim Loftus (202) 720-4623.**

**ESPY ON GATT --** Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said, "The passage of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) implementing legislation are votes of confidence in the future. The GATT will strengthen the world economy, increase demand for farm products, and give American farmers, ranchers, processors, and exporters a level playing field to compete for trade opportunities in the growing global marketplace." **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

**LABEL CHANGES --** USDA announced (December 2) a proposal to change food labels to inform consumers that some poultry products are made using a mechanical separation process. Mechanically separated poultry is produced with high pressure machinery that separates skeletal tissue from bone by crushing the bone, and then forcing the bone and tissue through a screening device such as a sieve. USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service said it will issue a proposed rule that would require mechanically separated poultry to be identified in the ingredients statement on hot dogs, bologna and other processed products as "mechanically separated chicken or turkey" instead of simply "chicken" or "turkey." USDA's Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety Michael Taylor said, "This proposal will help ensure that the labeling for processed poultry products is truthful and not misleading." The proposed labeling change is consistent with rules governing red meat processed in a similar fashion. **Contact: Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113.**

**'95 ELS COTTON LOAN RATE --** Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced (December 1) the 1995 price support loan rate for extra long staple (ELS) cotton will be 79.65 cents per pound and the Acreage Reduction Program (ARP) percentage will be 10 percent. The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, authorizes the establishment of a limitation on the acreage planted to ELS cotton if it is determined that the total supply will be excessive. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

**ARP REQUIREMENT FOR RICE** -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced (December 1) a preliminary acreage reduction requirement of 5 percent for the 1995 crop of rice. The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, requires that the preliminary ARP level for the 1995 crop of rice be announced no later than December 1 and the final ARP level be announced no later than January 31. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

**STILL HOLDING** -- As of December 2, USDA is continuing to hold some 36 million pounds of frozen beef from Australia in warehouses until it conducts tests to confirm Australian results showing the absence of a pesticide not in use in the U.S. The Australian embassy in Washington notified USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) that laboratory tests have proven negative for the pesticide chlorfluazuron. FSIS began this week to confirm Australian laboratory results. FSIS officials said available data from Australia has not suggested the need for a recall of beef that had passed through port of entry inspection in two states. **Contact: Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113.**

**USDA PROTECTS NEW PLANTS** -- The Department of Agriculture issued (December 7) certificates of protection for 31 new plant varieties. The seed-reproduced plants include corn, soybeans, wheat, tobacco, barley, beans, celery, corn, oats, onions, peanuts and peppers. Developers of the new varieties will have the exclusive right to reproduce, sell, import or export their products for 18 years. These certificates of protection are granted after a review of the breeders' records and claims that each new variety is novel, uniform and stable. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service administers the plant variety protection program which provides marketing protection to developers of new and distinctive seed-reproduced plants ranging from farm crops to flowers. **Contact: Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998.**

**FARM PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS** -- USDA has initiated a series of actions over the past year in the administration of farm programs. The purpose has been to slash the paperwork burden on farmers and improve efficiency in the USDA agency carrying out the mission. The actions stem from a task force study USDA undertook in February 1993 as part of a "Reinventing Government" Initiative. The study was titled a "Policy and Regulatory Review." Of the nearly 275 recommendations in the report, more than 200 have been approved, and 30 have been implemented to date. The thrust of the undertaking is to use a common sense approach to making farm program participation less complicated and burdensome for farmers. **Contact: Martha Cashion (202) 720-3310.**

**CHICKENS CAN CURE THEMSELVES** -- Agriculture Department scientists are working on a way to protect young chickens from salmonella by using bacteria taken from the guts of a mature chicken. A mixture called CF-3 boosts the resistance of a 3-day old chick to that of a 21-day old chick, which is strong enough to resist salmonella infection. USDA scientist Billy Hargiss said using natural methods of battling micro bacteria in poultry could reduce the need for antibiotics in chicken feed. **Contact: Donald Corrier (409) 260-9372.**

**FAX** -- You can obtain our radio and TV programming information and the **Broadcasters Letter** through your facsimile machine by calling USDA's AgNewsFax. Use the telephone connected to your FAX machine to call **(202) 690-3944**. At voice prompts press **1**, press **4**, then to receive **Broadcasters Letter**, press **9200**; radio newslines information, press **9250**; TV contents billboard, press **9260**; TV scripts, press **9270**. After all your selections, then press **#**, press **3**, and press the **start** button on your FAX machine.

## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA # 1958 --** In this edition of Agriculture USA, Brenda Curtis talks to Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy about the recent passage of the GATT and what it means for farmers. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary).

**CONSUMER TIME # 1439 --** Batteries and the holidays; holiday home safety; a season of moderation; Christmas tree history; a living holiday gift. (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features).

**AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1949 --** USDA closes field offices; Christmas tree "growing" is really "farming"; a farmer holiday gift idea; reorganization could make things easier for farmers; CRP and the 1995 farm bill. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE --** Friday, December 16, cattle on feed report; Monday, December 19, agricultural outlook; Tuesday, December 20, weekly weather and crops; catfish processing; Wednesday, December 21, livestock, dairy and poultry outlook; coffee products; Thursday, December 22, livestock slaughter, agricultural trade update. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newslines carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES --** Lynn Wyvill reports on mail order food safety for the holidays. Patrick O'Leary reports on the USDA field office of the future.

**ACTUALITIES --** Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announces USDA field office closings.

**UPCOMING FEATURES --** Will Pemble reports on USDA research on irrigation.

### SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

*Galaxy 7, Transponder 9, Channel 9, Audio 6.2 or 6.8, Downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.  
Available on Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., EDT; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., EDT.*

*Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.  
Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.*



## OFF MIKE

**SUB-ZERO WIND CHILLS**...from 10 degree temperatures along with the first 5-inch snowfall in recent days indicate that winter has arrived in the northern Great Plains, reports **Matt Westergaard** (KMIT, Mitchell, SD). Farmers in southeast South Dakota enjoyed record yields of corn and soybean crops this year, but they are concerned about low grain prices and the hog market. Matt is on the air about an hour a day with his primary reports airing from 5-7:00 a.m.

**25 YEARS**...in agricultural broadcasting is the milestone **Chuck Early** (WNIX, Greenville, MS) reaches this year with his "Mississippi Farm Focus" program. Chuck says this was a record year for rice production and acreage in the Magnolia state. Late rain lowered the grade of cotton, but rice and soybean grades were not adversely affected. Winter pasture conditions are excellent. He plans remote coverage of 22nd Annual Delta Ag Expo, January 24-25, in Cleveland, MI.

**NORTHEAST NEBRASKA FARM SHOW**...planning is underway by **Susan Risinger** (WJAG, Norfolk, NE). Scheduled for January 18-19, there are 90 exhibitors and sessions planned on livestock, grain marketing and property taxes. In past years, daily attendance has topped 3,000.

**AN EARLY CHRISTMAS**...gift of record crops has yielded a lot of happy farmers in Iowa. Many farmers reported corn yields of more than 200 bushels per acre. **Kevin Morse** (WOC, Davenport, IA) says farmers experienced nearly perfect crop conditions from planting through harvest, a total turnaround from last year's flood conditions.

**ADVOCATES FOR AGRICULTURE**...campaign in the northeast is wrapping up this month, reports **Jeff Stewart** (Ag Radio Network, Utica, NY). To date, nominees from seven northeast states have been received. Two \$1,000 awards will be presented for outstanding work in improving the image of agriculture.



**LARRY A. QUINN, Director**  
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